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THINGS WHICH CANNOT BE SHAKEN

Things Which Cannot Be Shaken

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"Never belittle our best achievements as a nation, but do not acquiesce in a self-righteous patriotism. Try to uplift the thoughts of your hearers by positive constructive preaching of the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Constantly remind your hearers of the power of the Spirit of God active among men. Remember that the Church of Christ should be a fellowship of men and women of all nations, praying and working for unity and peace.

"Speak at times of things which perplex us all, such as the value of prayer in war-time, undeserved suffering, the problem of evil. Do not slur over difficulties, and above all be honest. But frequently and strongly teach that evil must be overcome by good. It is not Christian not even religious to say that force must be met by force. We can only build peace between the nations by international justice and goodwill."—*The Bishop of Birmingham.*

CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	WHERE DOES THE CHURCH COME IN? . Leslie D. Weatherhead, M.A. (City Temple, London)	9
II.	PASSING THROUGH THE FIRE . . . Frank H. Ballard, M.A. (Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church)	23
III.	THE GREATER VICTORY . . . . Dr. F. Townley Lord (Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church)	31
IV.	FOUNDATIONS . . . . . Professor Archibald Main, D.D. D.Litt. (Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland)	45
V.	THE THINGS THAT ARE NOT SHAKEN Dr. W. R. Matthews (Dean of St. Paul's)	55

PAGE

VI. The Faith That Does Not Fail . 64
Richard Pyke
(President of the Methodist Conference)

VII. The Turning and the Glory . . 76
Hugh Redwood
(President of the National Brotherhood Movement and Religious Editor of The News Chronicle)

VIII. The Unfailing Gospel . . . 86
J. M. Richardson, M.A., B.D.
(Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of England)

IX. The Cost of a New World . . 96
Dr. Donald Soper
(West London Methodist Mission)

X. The War of 1939 108
Bishop Winnington Ingram, K.C.V.O., D.D., LL.D.
(Formerly Bishop of London)

I

WHERE DOES THE CHURCH COME IN?

By Leslie D. Weatherhead, M.A.

It is an interesting, and at first thought, a saddening thing that when a great catastrophe befalls, men turn round on the Church and accuse it of having failed.

We shall presently turn to look at the points at which the Church certainly has failed her Master and the world, but it is important, first of all, to notice that those who most disgustedly make this charge, are not the keen Christian people of the community but those on the outskirts, and many, indeed, quite outside the Church's ministrations.

And their charge is, in a true sense, a compliment. "The Church couldn't prevent war," they say bitterly, "so what use is it?" Evidently then they expected it to, wanted it to, and even thought it might do so. They forgot that it couldn't do so, any more than the earliest church

could have prevented Christ's Crucifixion. If men are set on evil, then unless the Church has, and successfully takes, its chance to do its own work and change men's hearts, then the evil will be done. That does not mean that the Church fails, for it increasingly makes men ashamed of evil, as it has, in the last hundred years, done something to make men ashamed of war. With one exception, no longer do nations go to war on a slight or flimsy pretext. And when evil is done, the Church seeks to turn it, as far as may be, into an asset. That very Cross which could not be prevented is now the Church's greatest asset.

The truth about the constant criticism of the Church, in my view, is that those who make it, not usually its members, regard the Church as an embodiment of such idealism as is left in the world. So whenever that idealism is assailed or eclipsed at any point, the criticism of the Church's failure is heard again in the land. It may be the defalcation of some individual or it may be a world catastrophe, but the psychology behind the criticism is the same.

It is worth while asserting, what to real members of the Church was never in doubt, that the Church cannot fail, if only, among other reasons, because it is a Divine Society. It was not begun on earth but in heaven. And it "came down from heaven." It was not begun when Jesus called men into fellowship with him, though that was the beginning of the Church *on earth.* That earthly fellowship was only a projection or image of the fellowship of souls with God from everlasting to everlasting, just as Christ Himself was a projection in terms of a human life, lived out in space and time, of God Himself. We recognise this at Holy Communion when we say, "Therefore with angels and archangels and all the company of Heaven, we laud and magnify Thy Glorious name.

The Church on earth, by which I mean all who love and try to serve Jesus Christ, whatever their label, is essentially spiritual, and if everyone now in that community on earth were wiped out, our buildings destroyed, our organisation ended, the Church would be alive, for it is in the unseen, and sooner or later, other forms of it in

terms of human fellowships would arise. It doesn't matter if you destroy all the copies of a snapshot that have been printed, so long as the negative is in safe hands. All Christian communions on earth are feeble copies of the original which is in Heaven and no storms of earth can touch that.

This thought, at such a time as this, gives to my own mind a sense of peace as I watch so many lovely earth-dreams being shattered. Evil can only tear up photographs. God holds the negative. And when evil has done its worst, men will begin to translate into terms of human fellowship and action the dream which dwells immortal and secure for ever in the heart of God.

Indeed, the comfort is greater than that. For throughout all history the Church's witness has ever been most potent when she herself has been persecuted and despised. No one who knows his Church History would claim that the high-peaks of the Church's power in the world were those days when she was smiled on by the world and had the support of princes. The Church was never so powerful as when, keeping sincerely

her true purpose before her, she was in ill-odour, when her members were few, and when it was costly and even physically dangerous to belong to her.

These thoughts, of course, however comforting, must not allow us to sink into complacency. How wildly we swing from complacency to panic and back again to complacency! Many things cry aloud to be done: the healing of our divisions—for how can we get the nations together which differ so fundamentally if we cannot get the churches together whose loyalty is one —the surgical treatment of our adhesions to a spurious orthodoxy, bewildering ritual, and a meaningless mumbo-jumbo of effete phrases. Most important of all we must really be a missionary church, pushing our campaign not merely into obscure parts of the world, which gives the comforting illusion of missionary enterprises and provides material for thrilling speeches and photographs, but pushing our campaign where the missionary spirit is far more needed, into the phases of men's lives so often closed to Christ, men's thinking, men's money making, men's

pleasure seeking, men's ambitions; men's international relationships, those fields which, because the gospel has not been sown in them, bring forth the dread harvest of tares, in particular those tares which we call war and poverty and unemployment. No Church is truly missionary which seeks to convert the heathen, and yet leaves vast territories of man's activity at home as pagan as any South Sea island could well be. Finance, industry, patriotic feeling, education, art, literature, must be regarded from the missionary standpoint and with the missionary fervour, just as much as distant lands. What missionary triumph could be finer, what mass-movement more satisfying than to see the fine young men and women who "adore" modern poetry and music and who are ready to sacrifice for the ideals they dimly see, wake up to the beauty and dynamic there is in *real* Christianity. Many of us preachers must end our delightful habit of reminiscing about what Jesus did once, and in His name cast out devils *NOW*.

No! we can never remain complacent while so much remains to be done. But the present

situation invites an immediate answer to the question: where does the Church come in now? May I offer three suggestions?

1. We can offer comfort and encouragement.

I think I feel most sorry in these days for those who have no adequate philosophy of life with which to meet them.

Here is part of a letter I received last week:

> "Please forgive my writing to you . . . but I am desperately miserable. . . . I am 26 years of age and married to the (to me) most marvellous man in the world. I want to stress how kind, unselfish, and absolutely good he is." The writer goes on to say that he, like herself, was originally religious and then lost his faith with the passage of the years. The letter continues, "With the events of the past few weeks and the knowledge that in a very short time my husband will, in all probability, be in France, I do so desperately feel the need of some sort of religion, but the blind unquestioning religion of my youth has no comfort for me."
>
> "I think this is probably the first time in my life that I have felt the need of religion, but I do know that if I can't find some comfort and some truth, I don't see how I can go on."

If your philosophy of life teaches that this life is all, that there is no God, no purpose or plan being worked out which cannot ultimately fail; if life has no abiding values and if every

spiritual security is vain, then life now must be a nightmare.

If, on the other hand, you really don't "fear them who can only kill the body and after that have no more that they can do"; if you believe in a loving, finally omnipotent God Who is Himself the most awful casualty in this war, suffering in *all* His children's sins and pain, yet still in charge of His world, still at the wheel, still calm and confident that He can win His world without final loss, a God whose plans go on on the other side of death, why then you have a treasure no hand can touch and no evil can destroy.

2. We can offer again the needed power to achieve.

One cannot watch the brave plans of men take shape without being reminded of those buildings scattered over the country and called Someone or other's "folly." There is one on the top of a hill near Matlock. Someone has had a splendid idea and carried it out, only to find that it lacked something, water, perhaps, by which alone it could be made to function and which cannot be

brought to it. The building is there, but no life can be sustained in it. The machinery is there but not the current: The idea but no power to make it live.

Read Mr. H. G. Wells recent letter to *The Times*. Indeed consider all the schemes which that brilliant thinker—and others writing from the same point of view,—have put forward for a better world. The Church does not scorn them but she writes for them all a label which damns them. They are humanist. By this is meant that they presuppose that in man alone is all the power necessary to make the machine function. And frankly it doesn't come off. The promised glories do not appear. The goods promised are not delivered.

Do you recall how often it has been said that no problem existed between this nation and that, which, *given good-will*, could not be settled amicably round the conference table? But it is just that good-will which is lacking and I don't know anything that makes it save the spirit of Him Who came to bring peace and good-will to men.

One wonders what, in his soul of souls the young Nazi thinks now that the Führer's plans have unfolded. Where is the promised Arcady? —a reign of terror, insufficient food and war thundering at the gates. Arcady is not in Nazi-ism. Nor is it in Communism if reports from Russia be true, nor in the strange mixture of the two, tried for the first time, nor in Fascism, though each ideology holds a shred of truth and all have called forth sacrifice and self-discipline which are not without challenge to the Christian.

We need not scorn others. The League of Nations, very much our own concern, hasn't worked. And to change the names and speak of Federal Union won't accomplish the magic which changes the turnip into the fairy coach unless a new spirit is allowed to work in the hearts of men. And the spirit is the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. That may sound pious but it is true. He who called Matthew the publican and Simon the Zealot, a man who, by the most solemn vows, was committed to stick his knife into any publican he encountered, He who could weld them into a fellowship which spread to the

ends of the earth, can do the same for nations. But man-made plans alone will not accomplish it.

The world at the moment is a lunatic asylum. All men want peace except the super-madmen. Yet men fight. All men want comfort in a world which God has filled with good things, yet thousands starve . . . and so one could go on. We did well to call November 1919 an Armistice. It has lasted 21 years but the same old war goes on in a more frightful form, for men's hearts are never changed by battle whether they call themselves victors or vanquished. And the state of men's hearts determines the kind of world they live in.

3. We can offer the gospel which changes men's lives. Peace after all is a by-product. The Church can't do much by telling statesmen how to do their job or criticising them when they've done it. It can't do much by sending up resolutions carried unanimously by men who never have to carry the responsibilities involved. It can't do much by pressing on a Government a programme which it must know the country is too pagan to accept. (Yes, I include Pacifism

there!) Nor does it help when the Church pretend to Economical authority.

But by concentrating on that power from God which can change lives, a power we must seek .to see released in every phase of men's activities—for the world is His not geographically only, but in every way, industrially, culturally, scientifically—we can not only do our true work as a Church but do the thing which at the moment most needs doing.

Certainly we may, and must, say that war is wrong. But merely to pass a resolution that "war is incompatible with the spirit of Jesus Christ" is like a medical conference passing a resolution that "cancer is incompatible with the spirit of health." Our medical friends concentrate on the *cause* unremittingly. So must we. The cause is the state of men's hearts and the cure may be a long time coming, through the blindness and stupidity of our hearts, but at least we know it will come, for though we see not yet all things subjected to Him. . . . we behold Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour. The Church often stumbles, often errs,

often does silly and even sinful things. The only thing it can't do is to fail. Christ is greater than Hitler. Say that to yourself many times and let this story push it home.

"In the first days of the Christian persecutions a young Christian boy was passing into the arena to be thrown to the beasts. As he passed through the gates a Roman soldier standing there, whispered sardonically to him, "And where is your carpenter's son now?" Quick as a flash came the answer: "He is making a coffin for your Emperor."

From the same fine book—Bishop Crotty's Lenten Book—comes a parable which rounds off my message. A clergyman was wrestling one Saturday evening with his sermons and was continually plagued by his small daughter who kept interrupting him. Unwilling to turn her out of the study he wondered how on earth he could amuse her. His eyes fell on a map of Europe lying on his table. He picked it up, cut it with a sharp knife into innumerable small pieces and, giving them to her, told her to reassemble the map. Thinking he would thus

keep her quiet he turned to his work again. To his astonishment in a few moments she was back at his desk with every fragment in its place. When he asked her how she had managed it, she said simply, "Well, you see Daddy, there was the picture of a man on the back of the map and I found that when I got the man right, Europe came right."

The Church comes in just here. Her job is not that of the politician or the economist. It is to help God get man right. When man is right the world will come right.

So follow two pertinent questions: Is God having a chance every day to get you right? And, secondly, Are you praying for Hitler every day?

II

PASSING THROUGH THE FIRE

By Rev. Frank H. Ballard, M.A.

> When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.—Isaiah xliii. 2.

September, 1939, sets us thinking about August, 1914. It makes me think especially of how, as a young minister seeking some word of comfort for my congregation in a small Cheshire town, I hit upon the great promise in Isaiah xliii: "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." It is natural that this word should recur to me now, for it reminds me, not only of the beginning of the last war, but of a dark hour in 1917 when I was sitting in a hospital messroom outside Salonika listening to an officer who was telling how his boat was torpedoed in the Mediterranean and he was picked up by an Allied destroyer. But less than half my mind was heeding him: the rest was clouded and aching

with the troubles and horrors of the hour. And suddenly, as though a voice spoke clearly in my ear, the old text brought courage and hope, and I was able to go quietly on my way again.

The prophet himself was speaking at a time of crisis. With the flower of his people he was an exile in Babylon. Year after year had passed since they had been led out of Jerusalem and forced to eat the bitter bread of dependence. Some of them had adapted themselves to the new environment and even become money-lenders to their masters, but in their hearts was a deep longing for liberty and for their own motherland. At last hope flared up, for Cyrus, the Persian, was advancing with a mighty host. Would he overthrow the Assyrians? If so, would a new and better day dawn for the Jews? It was at that moment the prophet lifted up the voice of comfort. A conflagration was coming, but they should not be burned; neither should the flame kindle upon them.

Is there any sense in which we can repeat the promise now that a greater conflagration threatens the nations?

We can at least affirm this: that the truth shall prevail. For months, and even for years, we have been subjected to a campaign of lies. Men have spoken to millions, not according to fact but according to personal desire, or what they believed to be national interests. Nations have been fed on falsehood. And now that fighting has begun we must not be surprised if prevarication increases. Even where there is not intentional misrepresentation there will be exaggeration and suppression of fact and prejudiced thinking. Few men can think truly in wartime. Yet in the end truth must prevail. That was the faith that animated John Wycliffe when he retired from Oxford to Lutterworth. He had been urged by his friends to be silent on the subject of the Eucharist. But he was not made for expediency or weak compromise. Standing four-square for the principle he saw so clearly, he protested: "I am confident that in the end the truth must prevail." It was the creed of that valiant man of our own times, Thomas Masaryk. Of the race and spirit of John Huss, he belonged to a people who had

once been proud and free, but for centuries had been swallowed up in a great empire. He knew, however, that though liberties may be trodden on and traditions traduced, they have a way of rising again and surprising the world with new vitality. He devoted his long life to that resurrection, and while an instinct for the heroic remains the story of his life will be told by fathers to their sons. That same creed has been proclaimed again in these last days, when the Republic of which he was the first President has been torn asunder and trampled underfoot. "Truth prevails" is the message broadcast by the younger Masaryk. We must not be disappointed if it does not prevail just when and where we expect it to prevail. There may be many surprises, for that which we see and value may be but one aspect of truth. But sooner or later truth will prevail. And truth is best, even when it seems to be contrary to our immediate interest. We must affirm that, for it is part of our faith in God.

And the Church of Jesus Christ will prevail. Not perhaps in its present form. It was changed

for good and for evil in the last war. In face of contemporary evil we came to see the absurdity of our divisions, and there went forth a great and increasing cry for unity. It was reduced in numbers, here in the West, and it may be reduced again. Before this war is done we may be reminded many times of Gideon and his army reduced to a handful of men, but all of them stalwart soldiers. The organization may be reduced to a fraction of its present dimensions. We may find it impossible to maintain costly buildings and colleges and denominational headquarters and paid ministries. Last September the Principal of one of our colleges said to me when sharing with me in a service in my own church: "We shall soon be meeting in dens and caves of the earth." Perhaps he is right. God only knows. But the Church as a spiritual fellowship will prevail, as it has prevailed in Russia. If men doubt this they may find a dose of history reassuring. It was when Rome, which for centuries had been the metropolis of civilization, was being sacked, that Augustine set down his vision of the City of God—a vision

which was to be a rallying point for Christendom for centuries to come. It was in 1796, when the Channel was so infested with privateers that ships sailed in convoy that the *Duff*, probably the first missionary ship to sail the high seas, hoisted the flag of "three white doves with olive branches on a purple field," and a new stage in the extension of the Kingdom began. It was when Bishop Butler declined the Archbishopric of Canterbury, asserting that it was too late to restore a falling Church, that the Wesleys and Whitefield were preaching a gospel which was to stir the world. What will emerge out of the present conflict no one knows, but the Church of Christ shall not be burned. The Gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

What of ourselves? Can we promise that as individuals we shall be immune from the terror by night and the arrow that flieth by day? In the last war a woman assured me that her son would return safely because she had given him a consecrated crucifix and he was wearing it under his tunic. Can we make any promise like that? No. That is superstition and magic,

not religion. The rain falleth on the just and on the unjust. And so do the bombs. You or I may survive the worst of the war only to fall in an influenza scourge in the hour of victory. But is there no sense in which the old promise can be applied personally? In September, 1914, when the German troops were sweeping towards Paris, a French Protestant minister stepped into his pulpit and preached a brave sermon on "Our Invincible Legions." It was based on the story in 2 Kings, about Dothan invested by the hosts of Syria. Elisha's servant, terrified, cried out, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" Elisha himself simply prayed that the servant's eyes might be opened. "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." It was magnificent, both in Dothan and in Paris, and it encouraged Parisians and gave them a new confidence. But not all invading armies have been turned back as they approached capital cities. We have seen many cities fall in our times, and there were no hosts of angels to protect them. Yet the promise stands at least in this sense, that the real self is not this bodily

presence. The body may be shot or burned or drowned and yet the real self remain untouched. If we are overwhelmed in this proper sense it is only because we ourselves have capitulated. And we invite the enemy to come in whenever we stoop to impurity and deceit and pride. This is the promise of Jesus—not immunity from physical danger, but peace in the midst of tribulation. His peace He gives to us, and if we possess that we may walk through the fire and not be burned.

Fire deals differently with different material. It burns up the dross. It refines the gold. Let us pray that whatever in us and in the nations and in the Christian Church is evil may be consumed. And let us pray that we may come through this great conflagration as pure gold.

III

THE GREATER VICTORY

By Dr. F. Townley Lord

Now hear me therefore, and deliver the captives.
—2 Chronicles xxviii. 11.

We cannot read the Old Testament without hearing the noise of battle. In books like Kings and Chronicles we constantly hear the clash of arms, the fierce shouts of the victors, the agonised cries of the vanquished. Those were days when passions ran hot and cruelties were practised without excuse. It is, I confess, disheartening to wander through these martial pages: but occasionally our attention is arrested by something different, by a gleam of mercy amid the surrounding darkness, by the quiet accents of peace amid the brawling of war. And whenever we do come across such a passage our emotions are like those of a traveller in the arid desert who suddenly finds an oasis. It is to one such passage that I would direct your attention now.

We go back to the days of Ahaz, king of

Judah. He was not a good king. The editor of the book of Chronicles, judging him by later standards, when worship had been centralised in Jerusalem, and careful attention was paid to the Divine law, notes with disapproval that Ahaz favoured idolatry, and introduced heathen rites into the land and even ventured upon child-sacrifice. A bad king! And retribution had come upon him. First he suffered defeat at the hands of the king of Syria; then the king of Israel attacked him, and we are told that one hundred and twenty thousand Judaeans were lost, including some in high places. It sounds like a communiqué in modern warfare! And there were prisoners, too, some two hundred thousand of them, dragged from their native Judaea to servitude in Samaria in the north.

There was great rejoicing, we imagine, in that capital city, when the news of the overwhelming victory arrived. The tidings passed from mouth to mouth that a great convoy of captives was on its way: two hundred thousand of them, men, women and children. It requires little imagination to picture that sad convoy:

an endless train of disheartened people, ragged, footsore, hungry. Behind them were the homes they loved: ahead, a life of degradation and drudgery, possibly in the slave markets of Nineveh and Babylon, or even across the sea. The warriors of Samaria made ready to greet their returning and victorious comrades; the whole population of Samaria was agog with excitement—all except one man: and with him we are concerned now.

There was a prophet of the Lord in Samaria named Oded. We know nothing about him save what is recorded in this incident: but the little we know is enough to place this obscure man high in the annals of the great.

As he saw in the distance the long line of captives approaching his heart was heavy. He felt that their plight was God's judgment on them for their sins. But had not Israel sinned, too? And had they in Samaria any right to exult when their own hands were stained?

Oded determined to speak out, and he made what, in the circumstances, was an amazing suggestion. He proposed that these captives

should be set free! The soldiers who heard him thought him mad. "What!" they cried: "are all our labours to go for naught?" By every law of warfare they were surely justified in keeping the spoils of victory. Yet there were wiser heads in Samaria that day. Oded's words had not been in vain. There were some leaders who were impressed by what he had said. His plea for mercy had touched them, though they hardly cared to show it. Oded's counsel prevailed. The captives were clothed and fed, and allowed to retrace their steps to the land they loved. Back to Jericho they went, and we can imagine the astonishment in that fair city of palms when the captives were seen approaching. It was indeed an unexpected turn of fortune: due, though they did not know it, to one man: a man who, amid the prevailing passion of war had not forgotten that there were values of life not to be lost even in the hour of victorious struggle.

But why, you may ask, worry about an obscure man in the mists of forgotten ages? What message can Oded have for a time like our own? The answer is: a vital message, relevant

now to the circumstances in which we find ourselves. You will appreciate this if I summarise Oded's point of view as set forth in the incident we have considered.

I

Here is a man who believed in the judgments of God as operative in history.

Commenting on the victory over Judah he said: "behold, the Lord God of your fathers was wroth with Judah: He hath delivered them into your hand". The principle behind that statement is cardinal to the Christian view of life. Oded believed that Judah's fall was a consequence of her sin, and that somewhere in the calamity the hand of God was at work.

There are really two principles involved here: first, that national fortunes bear some relation to national deserts; and, secondly, that national fortunes are within the orbit of Divine providence.

These principles are familiar to all who know their Bibles. The Hebrew prophets had what we may call a philosophy of history. Read, for example, the fifth chapter of Isaiah, where the prophet pictures the approach of dread

Assyria. "And He will lift up an ensign to the nations from afar, and will hiss unto them from the ends of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed, swiftly". The point in this vivid poetry is that it is God Who will use Assyria for the achievement of His purposes. Similarly, in the prophetic passages which foretell the return from captivity, we have the idea of the Persian Cyrus as the instrument of God's purposes. Such an idea is by no means confined to the Hebrew literature. We find a philosophy of history in the writings of the apostle Paul, e.g. in Romans ix-xi. Paul did not believe that life is just a whirling vortex of blind forces: on the contrary, there is purpose in history, and it is the purpose of God.

In days like these there is great encouragement in this view of human life. Calamities have come upon us: the disappointment inseparable from the failure of our hopes: the pessimism natural to a day when, in spite of the efforts of twenty years, might and brute force still ravish the fair fields of earth. We had hoped for something better: some more immediate answer

to our prayers. Our dreams have not come true. What then? Are we to give way to despair? Are we to sink into gloom, feeling that human folly has placed itself beyond the purposes of God? Not at all. The workings of the Divine will are not easy to discern, but if we believe in the Christian view of life at all we must believe that, in spite of trial and suffering (perhaps by means of it) right and truth and justice must be vindicated. We cannot think of God as a mere spectator of our human folly. We must believe that, in ways we cannot see, the Divine purpose is working itself out even through the blood and tears of our generation. To believe that somehow good will be the final goal of ill is not a poetic dream remote from fact: it is the assured confidence of all who take their stand on the truth of the Gospel. The nature and being of God are our ultimate ground for the conviction that the values of the spirit must prevail.

II

Here is a man who, when estimating the causes of calamity, is not blind to his own nation's guilt.

"Are our own hands clean?" asked the prophet Oded. He was as sensible as any of his contemporaries of the sins of Judah, but he was frank enough to acknowledge that other peoples, including his own, were not without blame.

It is always easier to blame the enemy. Both in the Great War and in the present struggle we must all have been impressed by the attempts made to fix the blame. (This, by the way, indicates a certain progress in human affairs. Once upon a time nations went to war without troubling to lay the responsibility on their opponents! To-day "propaganda" is in itself a symptom of a certain uneasiness, as if nations felt it necessary to excuse resort to war). It is not a difficult matter to draw up a list, in the present instance, of the offences against international law committed by our opponents. Our statesmen have done that very clearly. But there is something which is not so easy, the mood and temper which admit *humanity's common guilt* in the calamities which have befallen us.

I do not propose now to enter into what is

a very controversial realm: but I will say this: that it is our Christian duty to look to our own lives, to see wherein we have ourselves come short. Times like these make us very critical . . . of others. But there is a word in the Gospels which is full of meaning now: "first cast the beam out of thine own eye". Our Church leaders have called us to prayer. Are they not right when they say that the first element in that prayer should be the prayer of confession? Have we consistently followed the Divine will? Has the spirit of Christ actuated our lives? Have we honoured God's Day and God's Word? Have we sought to be worthy of His blessing? These are deep and serious questions, but I think we shall all agree that these days of trial should send us to our knees.

III

Here is a man whose compassion was stronger than the exultation of victory.

Joseph Parker's comment on this unusual incident was "Love rising above mere politics and pedantries". No doubt there was opposition

to Oded's suggestion. "Give the captives their freedom!" (we can imagine some of the soldiers saying) "it will be a sign of weakness!" "Let them return home!" (we can almost hear the indignant protests of the rulers)—"it will be bad policy, for the Judaeans will be encouraged in further resistance; they will think we have grown soft". But Oded rose above considerations of military effect. Deeper than any other emotion in his breast was compassion: and, let us note, its motive was religious.

The trouble, even when we are engaged in a righteous struggle, is that the heat and ardour of our effort may submerge the finer chivalrous qualities which are the mark of the human spirit at its best. How very difficult it is to prevent righteous indignation from sinking to the level of mere vindictiveness. We may enter on a campaign with the very highest principles, armed in spirit with courage and resolution: but if in the course of it we allow passion to usurp the place of calm reason, if the temporary resort to weapons of warfare makes us forget the noble human qualities,

are we not already losing? There was a sentence often on men's lips—you will recall it—in connection with the years that followed the Great War: "winning the war and losing the peace". What did that mean, if not that it is possible in the thrill of victory to forget those nobler values of human life which alone can form the basis of enduring happiness?

Let it be put to Oded's credit that the springs of compassion were not dried up within him. Let us count it to his honour that the spectacle of suffering men and women still moved him to the depths. These, if you like, are not martial qualities: no: but they are something better: they touch a realm of life which we all know to be noble. War, unhappily, always tends to invert the true values of life. I am well aware that war can produce great heroism and noble qualities of spirit. But it is also true that it exalts the lesser things at the expense of the greater. It puts a premium on the material at the expense of the spiritual. Chemistry and mechanics loom large in their importance: the quieter branches of culture sink into the background. Mass

organisations assume dominance, while the values of the individual are for the moment allowed to sink into abeyance. These, I suggest, are the dangers to which the best of us are prone, and therefore we are particularly grateful for the simple kindliness of an Oded who, while others were cheering the victors, could not forget the human plight of those in distress.

And now, ere we leave this fascinating story, we turn our glance away from the prophet Oded to those captives, so suddenly and unexpectedly restored to their homes. I do not suppose there is any feeling in human experience quite like that of the captive who has found his freedom. The Hebrews had a festival in which they celebrated their escape from the Egyptian bondage. They grew lyrical as they thought of it. Do you wonder? Who can refrain from song as he thinks of freedom? Wordsworth, in one of his sonnets, spoke about the

> sacred nurseries of blooming youth
> In whose collegiate shelter England's flowers
> Expand, enjoying through their vernal hours
> The air of liberty, the light of truth.

The air of liberty, the light of truth! It is a great line, speaking of the most precious possessions of our social life.

I cannot picture those captives on their way to Jericho without seeing in them a symbol of humanity on its noble quests for liberty. The word is much on our lips these days: the ideals it enshrines are very precious to us, and for their sake our age is witnessing valour and sacrificial service. And I would remind you that those Judaean captives owed their freedom to a man who never lost his deep sensitiveness to human need, and whose compassion was motived by his sense of the reality of God. Does not this unusual story send your minds some centuries onwards to a day when, in the same country, there was Another who was "moved with compassion". He, too, spoke of freedom and of the deliverance of the captive. "Ye shall know the truth", He said: "and the truth shall make you free." As if to remind us (and not least in these days of strain) that it is by the true mind that we attain liberty: the mind that is stayed on God

and seeks to express His will in the spirit of His Son.

Our excursion into the warlike days of King Ahaz and his contemporaries has laid bare great principles of life and thought: the fact of God in the affairs of nations: the beauty of the compassionate spirit: the supreme joy of liberty. These are indeed great themes, and they might be approached philosophically and illustrated from the history of mankind. But we are thankful that the narrative in Chronicles takes them and puts them in a human setting. Belief in Divine purpose and judgment becomes alive in the mind of a man. Compassion puts on its beautiful garments in the robes of an obscure prophet, Liberty becomes a song on the lips of liberated captives. This is ever the way of the Bible: to express its great principles in human lives. As if to say that just as, centuries ago, a man was moved to action by his thoughts of God and his love for his fellows, so now it is the God-filled mind and the compassionate heart that will play the greatest part in the challenging situations of our day.

IV
FOUNDATIONS

A Broadcast Address by
THE RT. REV. PROFESSOR ARCHIBALD MAIN, D.D., D.Litt.,

If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?—PSALM XI. 3.

IN the course of family prayers last week, I chanced to read the eleventh Psalm, and you will not be surprised that I was immediately struck by one of its verses. To-night it is our text, and the words are: "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

Now we shall have a respite from the scholarship which would discuss critically the full and contemporary meaning of the Psalmist's words, and shall have nothing but a simple and frank talk about what our text means for us at the present moment.

No builder, be his work a cathedral or a cottage, but knows that his first task is the security of the foundations upon which his structure will be built. Everything rests upon them, and if they

are not strong his edifice will topple to the dust. It is, of course, a metaphor, but it bespeaks an eternal truth. There always have been, and there always will be, foundations in architecture, foundations in knowledge, foundations in business, foundations in governance, foundations in character, foundations in religion, foundations in life itself. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of foundations. Without security of foundation, every human enterprise and achievement, every hope and ideal of mankind, will fall to the ground. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Yes, what can be done in such a case by men and women to whom true religion is a master interest? It is what we were taught at school to call a 'rhetorical question', and the answer is so obvious that no answer is given.

At the present time, when most of us are thinking of the vital issues of peace and war, of life and death, surely there are many in Church and State sufficiently serious-minded to be examining the foundations which underlie national and international life, and make it

tolerable, yes, even possible. What are some of these foundations?

I venture to-night to suggest to you that they are—Truth, Reverence, Justice, Humility, and Religion. These are not unrelated the one to the other, but actually fit into each other so closely that they make a sure and strong structure on which may be erected a worthy temple of human achievement.

Do we realise the significant part which Truth plays in our lives? In the family, which is the first social institution into which you and I are introduced, we assume and must assume that each member is telling the truth; and our family life is only possible with that assumption. That is why one of the earliest lessons we are taught is against the evil of lying. There can be no trust between us, there can be no real communication in speech or gesture, unless we believe that we are not trying to deceive each other. In business, in a University, in the professions, in social assembly, there must be the expectation that men and women have regard for Truth, that their word is as good as their

bond, that falsity and deception are repudiated by decent-minded people. Without that expectation and that attitude to the spoken and written word, every University (if I may take an illustration that comes easily to me) every University in the world might as well close its quadrangles in despair. Truth, then, must surely be one of our most stable foundations.

On that base there must be room for another sure foundation—it is Reverence. Without Reverence for beauty and achievement and service there cannot be any true culture, but to-night I am thinking of Reverence between man and man. Society, either national or international, cannot endure, unless its members pay heed to the claims, rights, and privileges of their neighbours, unless they realise that their plighted word will be made good, and that it will never be given for anything that would harm the immortal souls of their fellow-men. No man and no nation can be strong, without the spirit of reverence. In any society of individuals or nations, there must be respect for the dignity of human being and personality, if life is to be

tolerable and even worth living. No state can be so powerful that it can afford to regard its neighbours with the contempt which is bred by a loss of reverence. Such a reverence discloses a further foundation, and that is Justice. It is not easy to disentangle all the threads that make up the tapestry of Justice, as a philosopher of ancient Greece found when he wrote his great classic; but without Justice the world can never have either hope or happiness. It is an unjust world where there is not liberty for men made in the image of God. The love of liberty is a birthright of nations who would be more than slaves, and has ennobled many of the tragic campaigns of a war-tortured world. Men and women of every race have given their lives for freedom. No government can be justified which would destroy by force the liberties of any people which respects the liberties of others. The world can never be happy until free men can live in free countries. Justice demands it.

Truth, Reverence, Justice—these are real foundations, but there are two more. A man or a nation might have a high regard for these

three foundations of society, and yet be a hard man or a hard nation. Humility must not be forgotten. No one can dare to be self-sufficient and self-righteous; no man is without sin. That truth should be manifest to all who respect Truth. Any society which is based upon self-righteousness is an edifice which will crash to the earth. If Humility is a foundation, there should be no society in which a man can lord it over his fellows and make himself the equal of God. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom", and without that fear man and man's civilisation avail but little, be they never so plausible. "Man's chief end" so the old Shorter Catechism says "is to glorify God"; it must never be to glorify his race, his culture, and least of all, himself.

Thus surely it follows that the greatest foundation of all is Religion. The philosophers and the historians who are worthy of remembrance have time after time proclaimed that Religion is by far the greatest factor in the building of a worthy state. Every God-fearing man and woman knows that it is a true message, but it is

in a time of crisis that the truth is burnt into our hearts by cruelty, sorrow, and sacrifice.

To-night, then, I venture, and that boldly, to declare that Truth, Reverence, Justice, Humility, and Religion are the foundations of a peaceable and enduring society of men and nations. Are they recognised and honoured to-day by the nations of the world? "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

My brothers and sisters, the avalanche of war has caught our beloved land, and in Europe to-day great nations, living in lands that were once called a Holy Roman Empire, are set against each other in the unholy campaign of swift and cruel death. No one in our Empire wanted war, yet all of us have been swept into the furnace of destruction. We do not hate our enemies. Please God, there will never in this country be a Hymn of Hate against the Germans. We have many ties with them; and in art, music, letters, and science, we have learned much from them in happier days. There are many of us who willingly pay our tribute to the genius and

achievements of the German people, and still claim our friendships with members of that great race. There are some of us, also, who are willing to accept a measure of blame that our relationship with Germany since the Great War has not been happier. But the trend of Nazi politics has shattered our dream of peace and peaceful solutions of the world's discontents. Our people strove for peace until the very last moment. Even yet, I repeat, we do not hate the German people; but what we repudiate is the government of the people. We are united as a people in our resistance to an evil system of governance which in its greed of power has scorned the path of Truth, trampled upon the Liberty of mankind, and flouted the birthright of nations. Here and there, it may be, there are some who in good conscience cannot have recourse to arms; but they are with us in their prayers, and so we have an unbroken front against an ungodly materialism of government which fears not God or man. We cannot escape the conclusion that Nazism has undermined the very foundations of society—Truth, Reverence, Justice, Humility, Religion.

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

We dare not claim that we are 'righteous', but we do claim that with us righteousness is still a living ideal. What can we do?

We must at all costs preserve these foundations, otherwise Liberty and Religion will vanish from our world. All of us are determined to take our stand against an evil spirit of aggression; and since one man has cast the die for war, there is but one way in which free and liberty-loving nations can oppose him. May God defend our cause!

My brothers and sisters, let us be of good cheer. Though there is ground for sorrow, there is no ground for fear or pessimism. The fear and love of God cast away all other fears. Therefore, I bid you be calm and confident, for "our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

I have only a few more words to say. There is a verse in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians which I leave with you. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid,

which is Jesus Christ." You and I may examine critically what are the foundations of a society worthy of protection and may satisfy ourselves with an analysis, but we who are Christians know in our hearts that there is a sure and short way of digging into the foundations of life and that when we reach rock-bottom we find it is Christianity. Our poor, stricken Europe is in the throes of agony. Many are following a leader who promises them the glory of Power, and as yet have not found the only leader who can bring the greatest glory of Peace on earth and good-will amongst men. O Lord, open Thou the eyes of the world, and show them the Cross of Calvary!

V

THE THINGS THAT ARE NOT SHAKEN—Heb. xii. 27

By Dr. W. R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's.

It is obviously impossible to say anything adequate in this day of prayer. Though I spoke with the tongue of men and angels I could not find words to describe the state of Europe to-day and the vast issues which are being decided. A phrase which may seem to you to have a certain aptness is "this nightmare world." Does it not describe that sense both of horror and unreality which oppresses many of us? We could easily believe that we were dreaming. The organization of slaughter, the spreading misery, the ruin of all culture cannot be real. We shall wake up soon. But the dreadful truth is that all this is really happening. We have to live with it and in it. Our natural reaction, since we are flesh and blood and not cast iron, is to shrink from the grim prospect. "Woe is me that I have been fated to live at such a time." Our

personal problem is to know what we can say to these things and how we can achieve some measure of courage and serenity.

It is difficult indeed to see how those whose hopes are confined only to this present world can confront the world as it is without despair, but we, brethren, who join in this day of prayer confess by our presence that we have a firmer foundation. We do not base our lives and our hopes on things that are seen. We believe that the creative and decisive force is spirit—and the supreme power in the world the Spirit of God.

Perhaps, when so much of our attention is given to the production of weapons and the material needs of the population it is hard to recognise that behind the war there is a spiritual conflict. But so it is, and it is most important that we should recognise it and understand it.

If you asked a simple-minded person what caused the war he might reply that it was made by some very wicked men. He would be right—as simple people generally are. But he would not be telling the whole truth. Do you not agree with me that you can almost feel the sweep of

forces of evil through the world? In this great crisis of history we begin to know by experience what men meant when they spoke of demonic powers. We see hatred, lying, treachery, cool and calculated cruelty dominating men's minds, shaping their lives and fermenting whole populations. Not only so, these evil principles of destruction are raised to the dignity of a cult, an idealism, so that there are men who find a horrible spiritual satisfaction in cruelty, hatred and treachery. We are confronting men possessed. This demonic power has entered the world through individual sinners. Probably not one of us can claim to be wholly guiltless of some share in opening the way to the force of evil. Now, we believe with the firmest conviction that we as a nation have been called to resist the most portentous manifestation of the evil will. The time has come when it must be checked, frustrated and humiliated; not for our own sakes alone, but for the sake of the whole future of mankind. Though it seems we rarely had so few friends among the nations who dared even to sympathise in words, never have we had a

juster cause or been more plainly fighting for the very existence of all peace-loving countries.

There is a spiritual basis for the conflict. We fight, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers against spiritual wickedness in high places.' There can be no resistance to demonic forces but by spiritual power. The Kingdom of God is the only rule which can dominate the demonic forces. We need the Spirit of God in us and with us if we are to be the instruments for the frustration of the evil will. For what victory then must we pray as Christians? We cannot forget our own country, and we should be less than human if we did not pray that this ancient and noble people should overcome all that rise up against them. But we must pray, first of all, for the victory of God's Kingdom and for our victory only in so far as it is a victory for the Divine purpose.

To pray at times of crisis sometimes seems a feeble and even futile thing to do. That is because we do not take a dynamic view of prayer. We think that it consists in asking God to do something for us whereas the most

effectual prayer is to ask God to do something through us. Just as our sins may allow forces of evil to make their way into the world so our penitence and our prayers may be the means by which the creative Spirit may work in the world. We need to be constant in prayer, not like those who besiege with their petitions an indifferent deity, but like people who are opening a gate through which the healing power of God may flow over the earth.

The Christian religion began with a little group of men and women who gathered round Jesus. Most of the real success which Christianity has had has been connected with groups of persons who tried to live in the Spirit of Christ and in harmony with their neighbours. The cause of Christ advances by living much more than by talking and the power which can overcome even demonic forces of evil does not grow by passing resolutions, holding conferences, striking sermons or solemn ceremonies. It grows in the "little flocks" as Jesus called them, who try to live out in fellowship the gospel of love.

What can we do to stem the tide of tyranny

and hate? Very little it may seem—and yet in truth very much. Humanity is made up of men in families and fellowships.

The quality and temper of a nation, nay of a world, depend, in the last resort, on the life within those families and fellowships. If we can make our own family or our particular group a place where love and co-operation reign, we shall have made it a point of contact at which the eternal life of God will act upon the world.

We are not alone then. The spirit of good and peace is with us, if we are in tune with God's purpose, to carry us forward in the conflict. But how do we know that the spirit which, as we hope, is with us—the spirit of life and good—is stronger than the evil will, the spirit of destruction and death? What warrant have we to believe that in standing against tyranny, treachery and cruelty we are on the winning side? There are instances enough of triumphant wrong—Poland is only the latest example. We cannot know that the course of justice will be successful in any given time. It may have setbacks and disasters which look like knock-out blows, but because we

have faith in God we know that the spirit which rises against tyranny and oppression is the ultimate victor. It cannot be killed.

One night recently I stood on the little gallery outside the top of our great dome. A wonderful sight spread before me. There was the dimness of London in the black-out. The vast vault of the sky was full of scudding clouds: a gusty wind chased them across the field of vision. It was a spectacle of man's fear and of nature's restlessness. But behind the clouds and the darkness, the frame of it all, were the calm moon, the steady stars, and the serene sky in contrast to the fear and flurry below. There is a spiritual firmament and in it are lights more eternal than the sun and stars. These lights of the spiritual heavens do not change; they are not shaken by the brief and gusty passions of men. There abides the light of truth. What is not based on truth cannot stand. It is in conflict with the structure of reality. In this struggle we dare not claim to be the pure and blameless apostles of truth. There are insincerities and falsities in our lives which condemn us in the sight of the eternal

truth. But this at least we may claim: we are standing against a system which is based on one gigantic lie, that of the natural superiority of the so-called German race and its alleged inherent right to dominate others. There shines in that spiritual firmament the light of justice. Again we do not claim that we have a clean record. We stand condemned on many counts by the justice of God. But in this war we may truly assert that we are for justice against a system which makes perfidy a policy, which destroys all law and right not only between nations but for individuals. That which is the direct denial of justice cannot stand.

Mercy and love are among the lights of the spiritual firmament, eternal principles of reality. Far indeed are we from that state of things in which we could say our social life is free from cruelty and indifference to suffering; but this we may say, we are opposed to a system which has hardened its heart on principle, which lives by secret police, secret tortures and concentration camps. That which is a direct denial of mercy cannot stand.

Who can predict the vicissitudes of the struggle? We dare not claim that we as sinful men deserve to win, but of one thing we may be sure: the purpose of God, which is truth, justice and mercy, will not fail. The great lights of the spiritual firmament cannot be put out. In so far as we are at one with the purpose of God and really desire that truth, justice and mercy should prevail not only for ourselves but for all men, we may take heart. If God be for us who can be against us? Our truest prayer to-day will be that the people of this realm may be instruments worthy to further God's purpose for the world.

VI

THE FAITH THAT DOES NOT FAIL

By Rev. Richard Pyke

> Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.—Luke xxii. 31–32.

It should be remembered that these words, in which our Lord shows such solicitude for Peter, were spoken after the Last Supper, and before the Crucifixion. At the time when we might have expected Jesus to be wholly concerned with the tragedy that was speedily to overwhelm Him, He does not think of Himself, but of others. In this we have another illustration of His almost unequalled courage. The self-pity which so often is a disintegrating factor in our lives was not found in Him at all. He shows us by His example what our duty may be at such a time as this. If we turn in upon ourselves, with a disposition to magnify our troubles, we lose both a sense of proportion, and the ability

to minister to others. Against that we must all be on guard.

The incident, a part of which forms our text, must be traced to something in Peter which filled the mind of Jesus with a deep concern. Peter was the most outstanding and dominating personality among the disciples. His potential was above that of the average man. He could rise high or sink low. When such a man as Peter crashes, the effect is very far-reaching. No one knew human nature so well as Jesus: and as He looked at this rugged, impulsive, good-hearted man He saw to what dangers Peter would be exposed, for he was without the safeguard of modesty and introspection. In the solemn words addressed to him by Jesus, there was both warning and comfort: but because Peter regarded the warning as unnecessary, he was unable to receive the comfort, "Satan hath desired to have you that he might sift you as wheat," said Jesus. That is an Eastern manner of speech, which in less metaphorical language might be translated: "You will be exposed to sharp and sudden trial and temptation: you will be severely tested."

Before we turn our attention to the ministry of intercession which the text suggests, we might glance at the "sifting" of Peter, for we have the story of it. He was to be assailed from every angle. Almost immediately after these words, he was swept off his feet by the hostile atmosphere of the judgment hall, and the pert words of a little maid. We might well wonder that this fiery and usually fearless man should so suddenly prove to be a coward, if we did not remember that many of us have failed most tragically, when we have failed suddenly. The very assurance with which we have invested our virtues, has itself been crumbling unawares. It is such a peril as this, against which we must seek to safeguard those fine young fellows who have been uprooted, and flung into conditions where they learn both how bad, and how good men can be.

Peter's failure was complete: but that he did not lose his faith even then, is proved by the fact that he "went out and wept bitterly". Perhaps the most difficult thing for many of us is to let the light stream in upon our guilt or folly,

and then to repent with sorrow and tears. The turning-point in many lives has been the moment when they have decided whether to confess their sins and forsake them, or to persist in some kind of self-justification. Often enough, instead of asking for mercy, they have denied the need of it: instead of admitting that they have done wrong, they have excused themselves, and sought to justify themselves by dwelling upon the wrong of others. We know how Peter came through this sifting, of a grave moral lapse: he repented: he did not avoid Jesus when He rose again. The scene in which Jesus restores Peter to his true status as a disciple, as is told in John's Gospel, is one of the most beautiful in the New Testament.

But later, he was sifted by success, just as he had been sifted by failure. On the day of Pentecost, it is significant that we read in the Acts: "And Peter standing up with the eleven". He was the central figure: he was the preacher: and from the first he tasted the joy of successful evangelism. His insight and eloquence were so blended that thousands of people were converted

under his impassioned ministry. In the light of history it is not difficult to see that he was exposed to the temptation, which not every successful preacher has resisted. A man who has the ear of the multitude has every reason to be humble. Most of us are more severely tested by success than by failure. Few men lose their piety when they become poor: but we know, both from our Lord's warnings and from what we have seen, how dangerous it is to become wealthy. The sifting in such circumstances is a very subtle and insidious process. For example, the man whose wealth increases is hardly aware of the change that takes place in his attitude and relationship to less successful people. Pride and power often go hand in hand. Humility and riches often part company. All success brings its peril. The achievements of intellect are often won at the expense of the soul.

In Peter's case, however, there was another and yet sharper trial—the severest indeed that can come to any one. I suppose there is hardly any tradition which is more strongly supported than that which tells us that he was crucified

head downwards. But he was faithful unto death. Thus from whatever point of view we look at this great soul being sifted, we have the comforting assurance that our Lord's prayer for him was answered.

Let us turn now to the impressive fact that Jesus did pray for him. We might have expected that some word of assurance would have been spoken to Peter, or some promise of power given to him: all that Jesus did was to pray for him. But let there be no mistake about the value and effect of such a prayer. It is a great thing that any one should pray for us: but when it is Jesus who prays, we know that all the spiritual forces which surround and sustain a life, are invoked. Many of us feel as we look back upon life, that we have been miraculously and mysteriously saved, when our feet had "well nigh slipped". And we believe our salvation is due to the fact that somebody was praying for us. We need not turn to sensational instances of answered prayer: all life is evidence that "a praying breath cannot be lost, we cannot pray in vain". And is it not an impressive

fact that what Jesus did we can do? He does not employ an agency denied to us, when He seeks to surround Peter with saving influence. He works within the orbit of the ordinary human life. There is much we cannot do: but we can all pray. It ought to fill us with wonder, love and praise, when we recognise that the ministry of Jesus is a ministry into which we are all called. He does not transcend in action, the level upon which our lives may be lived. He tells us that we can reproduce in our lives what shone in His: and indeed, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father."

But here the whole subject of prayer is raised: and it may very well be that recent events, and indeed what is happening now, have struck a blow at our confidence in prayer. Is it of any use to pray? some will ask. We prayed that war might be averted: and our prayer is not answered. Why is it? It is not possible in a brief space to examine all that is implied in such a theory of prayer. If there is one thing that is certain it is that prayer can never be an instrument placed

in our poor hands, with which we may control the destiny of the universe, or the government of the world. If by prayer it were possible for us to determine great issues, affecting the future of the world, we might well tremble at the awful responsibility. We know so little of all that is involved: we see only a little section of an amazing whole. Any one indeed, who reflects on all the implications of the present tragedy, must be driven to say, as Jesus said: "Not my will but thine be done." We have cried earnestly to be delivered from what we know to be an evil, and have too often been indifferent to the corrosive sin which has been eating into the vitals of a nation, and to the suffering which has been inflicted by our pride and our selfishness, upon the thousands of poor little slum children. Canon Mozley said when Germany last invaded France: "War is hateful as a physical scourge, like a pestilence or a famine; and again it is hateful on account of the passions of those who originate it: and on account of the excesses of those who serve in it. But if we take the bad effects of those who serve

in it by themselves—it is not impossible to exaggerate them, at least by comparison; for while war has its criminal side, peace is not innocent: and who can say that more sin is not committed every day in every capital of Europe, than on the largest field of battle?" Such words must at least have the effect of bringing home to us the short-sightedness and selfishness of many of our prayers.

But though we may scarcely have recovered from the shock, as we recognise that brutal forces have not been arrested by God as we prayed they might be, we, none of us, have felt that we can give up praying. There is something within us, the better part of ourselves, which impels us to pray with greater earnestness than ever. Prayer is not a tool placed in our hands, with which we can do what we will: it is a power by which we are drawn within the ambit of divine love, and by means of which our own life, and the lives of others are enriched. I remember hearing a man describe how his ship was held up at the mouth of the St. Lawrence river by ice. It seemed hopeless: no frontal attack

was possible: but presently there was a cracking and thunderous explosions: In an incredibly short space of time the ice was swept away. He explained that the warm and silent waters of the Gulf Stream had melted the ice and cleared a way for the ship. So is it with the world to-day. We look out, and at first we are filled with dismay. What hope is there we ask? Hitlerism seems to have woven itself into the very fibre of a great nation. Persecution and lying have become a cult, almost a religion. Fanaticism appears to have attained to such formidable strength as to defy the gentleness of Jesus or the message of the Gospel. But prayer is as silent and as effective as the Gulf Stream. When we can do nothing else we can pray: and there is nothing greater that any one can do. Ought we not whenever we look into the face of a soldier, to be able truthfully to say, "I have prayed for thee?" Nor should we limit our intercession. All men are God's children: and we should pray for the whole family of God. One of the immediate and blessed consequences of the war should be a great and general revival of

intercession. The sifting is upon an almost unparalleled scale: and so should prayer be.

There is a final consideration for which I have no adequate space. Note what it was that Jesus prayed for. It may at first appear inadequate, almost inappropriate: "I have prayed for thee, *that thy faith fail not.*" But such a prayer is not surprising when we remember the value which Jesus always set upon faith. When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith in the earth?" It is faith He desires and seeks. This is the time of His coming. The moral structure of the world seems to be in ruins; and whether it is rebuilt or not, will depend upon the presence and power of faith. By faith we mean something vastly deeper than intellectual apprehension, or a set of beliefs: by faith we mean the surrender of life to God, in submissive and loving loyalty: and the awareness of a power which is nothing less than sharing the very life of God. Such a faith relates earth to heaven, and creates in feeble man a power by which he can subdue kingdoms, stop the mouths of lions, quench the violence of fire, and escape the edge of the sword.

It is faith that makes pessimism impossible. By faith we can turn to the pages of history and read with exhilaration of a power that came to the rescue of men in their extremity; by faith we can look through the clouds and see the strong walls and shining streets of the New Jerusalem, where the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations. By faith, we can hold steadfastly to the assurance that however dark the day, or disappointing the sequence of events, there will emerge the Kingdom of God ordered in all things and sure. No word therefore is more appropriate than the exhortation in the Epistle to the Hebrews which follows the great song of faith's triumphs. "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us: and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus."

VII

THE TURNING AND THE GLORY

An Address by

HUGH REDWOOD

Turn Thou us unto Thee O Lord and we shall be turned.—LAMENTATIONS v. 21.

THIS prayer wrung from the heart of a Prophet raises echoes in our minds as we read it. They are echoes from the Psalms. Let us turn for a moment to Psalm 80, the whole of which is a passionate appeal to God for a spiritual revival among his erring people. Three times in the course of the Psalm one appeal is made in almost identical language. "Turn us again O God" cries the Psalmist, "and cause Thy face to shine and we shall be saved". Here then we have a situation and the way out of it. We have a situation in which God's people are seen as a strife unto their neighbours and a cause of derision among their enemies. But it is realised that their salvation is dependent upon their *repentance*, so the cry is "Turn us and we shall be *saved*."

Our text, read collaterally with the Psalm, is an echo but not an exact echo. The need for turning is recognised as paramount but the cry is no longer "Turn us and we shall be *saved*"; it is "Turn us and we shall be *turned*". In other words the prophet is aware that the people on whose behalf he speaks are in need of repentance, but he is also aware that they have no will to repent. Is it an exaggeration of the facts to say that this is a true portrayal of the spirit of modern Christendom?

For my part I think it portrays the spirit of our times—especially during the last ten years or so—with tragic accuracy. As we have moved from one crisis to another, and as the clouds have grown steadily darker above our heads there has been, not only, or even chiefly, among Christian people, but among almost all thinking people, a realisation that we have been following the wrong road. We could have wished very much that some miracle might correct our error and put us spiritually in the right one, but there has been no real will to retrace our steps and find it for ourselves. There has been no real

will to repent. It is not so much open wickedness of which I am thinking; the world's great curse has been the spiritual apathy of the average man and woman, their numbness, their apparent helplessness. These things are the fruit of the times. They are the product in particular of the speed at which we have been living, a speed which has given us no time for serious thought and no time for prayer in the proper sense of the word. We have been led into the habit of mass thinking. We have been "suggestionised" from this quarter and that quarter until very many of us have almost lost the faculty of independent reasoning and have not even felt sorry that we have done so. Thus it has come about that we have been living more and more upon our nerves and that we have been haunted by fear. Perhaps one of our chief fears has been that we have progressed too far along the wrong road for any turning to be possible. And so we have seen multitudes of people abandoning the quest for a better way and giving themselves over to distractions of one kind or another. Like the men of old we have been called by

the Lord GOD of Hosts to tears and to penitence, but we have turned a deaf ear crying "let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we shall die".

More and more then I feel that our prayer to-day should be "turn Thou us unto Thee O Lord—and we shall be turned"; in other words, that we should pray for a great intervention of God in the minds of men; some large scale operation of the Holy Spirit which, almost in spite of ourselves, will bring about a violent revulsion from the evil ways into which we have strayed. Some would ask whether we are justified in offering such a prayer. I believe we are, since it has always been held that man's extremity is God's opportunity. But the question is not so much whether we are justified in praying this prayer as whether we are ready for it to be granted.

At Whitsuntide this year (1939), the British people were invited to pray that a new spirit might come into the world. That was the sense of a summons to prayer issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury and endorsed by the leaders of all denominations. It was also the

sense of an appeal made by the Pope to all Roman Catholics throughout the world. Such a summons carries with it implications which we dare not ignore. Before we pray that a new spirit may come upon the world it is essential that we should pray for our own hearts to be searched. Are we willing for it to happen? Are we willing for it to happen here and now? Bear in mind that such a heart-searching as I am speaking of, followed by such an outpouring of the Spirit as the religious leaders have asked us to pray for would be bound to have effects of a cataclysmic and shattering character. Are we ready for that?

I am speaking not as a minister of the Gospel but simply as a journalist whose chief concern is with the news of the Gospel. Because I am not a minister my right to speak thus may be questioned, but it is precisely because I am not a minister that I do it. It happens that I occupy an exceptional vantage point and what I see from it compels me to take my courage into both hands and speak out. My work as a journalist-evangelist lies outside denominational borders

and it affords me unique opportunities of studying what is happening in the various Churches, what is happening outside the Churches—which as a rule seems to me to be much more important—and what is being thought by ordinary men and women as represented in the very mixed readership of a big national daily newspaper. My daily post-bag brings me letters not only from "religious" people but in surprisingly large numbers from atheists, agnostics and those who are in such a state of spiritual fog that they would hesitate to apply any label to themselves. For several years I have been aware of two strong spiritual currents, the one away from *Christianity* and the other towards *Christ*—mark the difference. In the first category are very many Christians who have been losing their faith under the stress of the days in which we have been living, and many young people, who, after being favourably disposed towards Christianity, have lost hope in it, because it has seemed to have nothing practical to say. In the second category one has found a growing number who have come

to the conclusion that humanly speaking, the world's situation is entirely out of hand. Faced with this fact they have turned towards Christ as literally their only hope.

I am afraid that since the outbreak of war the number of Christians who have lost their faith has been greatly increased. To them it seems that God has failed. Of course that is not true. God has not failed and God will never fail. It is we who have failed and it is we who shall go on failing unless and until we are ready for true repentance.

The younger generation are aware that we have failed and there is only too much in our attitude to support their allegation that Christianity has no programme. That is why so many of them have turned towards Communism. But there is another side to the picture. The numbers of those who, convinced that we are in solid fact fighting against spiritual forces, are looking for spiritual comfort and guidance have been enormously increased since war came and I am positive that organised Christianity should recognise this fact and set about the prayerful formulation of

a positive programme. If it did so it might yet turn calamity into triumph.

The only programme which would be of any value, however, is one for which even now the great majority seem to have no heart. It must be based on conversion as absolute as St. Paul's and on surrender as complete as that of the early Church. If you want to know what I mean by that, look at the second Chapter of Acts and read in the last four verses the conditions under which the Church made daily additions to its membership.

It is manifestly useless for us to pray that warfare shall cease and the nations learn to be good neighbours if Christian people themselves are not ready to learn the lesson. We have been told from Lambeth and from elsewhere that the nations have been guilty of selfishness and prejudice which are alien to the mind of Christ. But that is true of the Churches as well. And we must not shrink from facing the fact that if the mind of Christ is to be invoked we shall all of us see some of our pet ideas going into the melting pot. I mean some of our pet conceptions

of righteousness and the laws of living. I do not hesitate to say that many of the issues upon which Christians display so much unchristian intolerance will have to be discussed from entirely new angles. We confess that we have erred and strayed from God's way. Then before we pray for the Holy Spirit, we must pray for true repentance.

"Turn us and we shall be *turned.*"

How does God turn men against their will? Let us look once again at the 80th Psalm. There the prayer is "Turn us again O Lord God of Hosts, *cause Thy face to shine;* and we shall be saved". There are many of us who can speak from our own experience of the crucial moment when God has seemed to do that very thing and there has come into our darkness a shining which has made us wheel round, first to *face* Him and then to *follow* Him. So it was with Saul of Tarsus who in his very persecution of the Church was zealous towards God. And I can number myself among a host of ordinary men to whom Jesus Christ was at one time nothing, but to whom He has come in their extremity,

bringing such light that now He is their all in all.

It was when darkness was upon the face of the deep that the Spirit of God moved at Creation. So I believe the Spirit is moving to-day and already shaping a new world out of our present chaos. It is more than likely that some of us may not like the shape of things to come but that should not stop us from praying that we may be ready to let God shape them as He will. If we will do that we may look confidently for light. We may have faith for greater things, faith in fact that a warring world may see such an intervention of God as will force it to pause and wheel about and recognise His supreme sovereignty. For the old promise stands: "The Glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

VIII

THE UNFAILING GOSPEL

By Rt. Rev. J. M. Richardson, M.A., B.D.

He taketh up the isles as a very little thing.
—Isaiah xl. 15.

The whole passage from which our text is taken might almost have been written for the situation in the world to-day. Babylon, "with its doors of brass and bolts of iron", had attained world domination, crushing the weaker nations with relentless force. Israel in particular had gone through a dreadful experience. The flower of the nation had been carried away captive, and the miserable remnant left behind in a wasted and ruined land was imprisoned even more cruelly by poverty, living in holes like the beasts of the field. Life was so tangled and terrible that men's hearts failed for fear. They could see no breaking of the evil thing, and they spent their days without hope.

Nor did their religion bring them much comfort. For some God had suffered a complete

eclipse. Their faith had gone. For others only a vague faith remained. God was still there, but either He had passed them over or His hand was shortened that He could not save. Neither in Babylon nor in Jerusalem could the Lord's song be sung.

The prophet comes to hearten them, and he does so in the true prophetic way. He does not present them with a nicely calculated exposition of political fact and possibility. There is no nice appraisement of the human situation, based either on the weakness of Babylon or on the resources that will come to the aid of Israel. Full well he knows that living hope and enduring courage come not in this way. So he turns them away from themselves and directs their gaze on God.

In effect he says to them: Your despair has come upon you because you have made God only a little bigger than yourselves. He is no more able to deal with things than you are. What is a real crisis for you has been made equally a crisis for your God. And there is but one way out. Learn to know God as He is,

get to know Him as He is waiting to reveal Himself. You will then have strength and courage to endure, and faith to face the issue unafraid.

With infinite sympathy for a suffering people, with real understanding of their terrible lot, with loving tenderness towards their doubt and their despair, the prophet strives to give them this vision of the Living God. He does it in the only way a man can give that vision to another. In incomparable language and with passionate eloquence he tells them of the revelation that God has made of Himself to his own heart. He has found God to be the Creator, keeping the whole world in ordered beauty, the God of Righteousness, holding the nations in His hand, and the Saviour who revives and renews the spirit of all who trust in Him. With impassioned and persuasive eloquence he strives to bring home to their reason and imagination that God is the "Incomparable One", almighty in power, faithful in righteousness, the saviour and helper of man. Nothing can withstand Him, nor escape His judgment. He cannot be thwarted by any

political combination. The confusions of history are in His hands. By setting up and bringing down He moves forward unto victory. Man's defiant resistance, however impressive and terrible it may appear to them, is but a feeble thing against the power and love of God. "He taketh up the isles as a very little thing."

The mood and temper of Israel are widely prevalent in the world to-day. There are many for whom the crisis means the eclipse of God. They have lost their Faith. For them we can only pray that their eyes may be opened that they may see the mountain—and the valley also—filled with the chariots of the Lord. There are others from whom Faith has not quite fled, but it is weak and wavering. Like the men of Israel they almost suggest that what is too much for them will also prove too much for God. The crisis for themselves has become a crisis for their God.

There are two great classes from which such men come. First, there is the class for whom the crisis is not that there should be war in the world to-day, but only that they should be

involved. When War breaks out between China and Japan they do not greatly worry, and their faith in God is not involved. It is all very sad and distressing, but nothing more. There is no sense of crisis, no sense of conflict between good and evil, no sense of an issue upon which the future of the Kingdom of God may largely depend. But when War catches them up in its terrible grip, when they are called upon to be bruised and broken in defence of anything they hold most dear, it is a different thing. Then they speak of Crisis. The shaking of their life becomes a world shaking event. Their faith in God is deeply involved. They had looked to Him for protection and peace, for happiness and safety, and they find themselves in the very centre of the storm. It is not only a crisis for them to face, it is a crisis for God because He allowed it to happen to them of all people in the world.

In the second place there is the class for whom the crisis is by contrast almost impersonal. They do not care greatly what happens to themselves, but they care immensely about the possible

destruction of the moral and spiritual ideals of the race, so painfully gained and hardly won. To them the crisis is that all the efforts of man to raise himself above the law of the jungle, all the striving of man for decency, law, and goodness, should be endangered. If these should fail or fall then God, whom they have equated with the sum of moral striving, and made merely the personification of man's highest ideals, must fall also. The crisis for them becomes also a crisis for their God.

With great tenderness to these men in their spiritual agonies, and with a very real insight into the nature and hardness of the struggle to which this war calls us, we must call them to a truer vision of God. With passion and with the deep conviction of those who have so seen God we must bring home to their reason and imagination that He is the "Incomparable One". Almighty in Power as in Love, Holy and Righteous in all His ways, the Saviour and the Friend of man. We must show them a God big enough to take the warring nations—and even the war itself—into His purposes of good and grace, a

God big enough "to take up the isles as a very little thing".

Yes, but how? By every Christian taking God at His word, and preaching the Gospel boldly and declaring that God matters most both in the waging and in the issue of the War. We must proclaim our faith that God has perfectly revealed His will in Christ, that the world will not work in any other way, and that resistance to that issues in defeat. His will can make or break the world, according as the world accepts it or rejects. We must proclaim that man cannot of himself keep that will, that for this failure God has intervened, in Christ, for man's salvation, and that the victory of Christ is final and complete. He has conquered sin. We must proclaim that God still comes to men as Saviour. He is still active for man's redemption, and, despite the many sinful things that happen in the world, still raises up for Himself servants who do His will and establish His purposes for men. We must proclaim that only He who conquers sin is not defeated by our sins. War may be a sin, but behind it lie other sins as cause, around it lie

other sins as allies, and beyond it lie many more as direct or indirect result. Men try to meet them one by one, then try to make a scale of heinousness between them. Men love to single out a special sin for prominence, and claim that its removal would mean the coming of God's Kingdom. They work hard and earnestly at this removal, and they fail. Sins are only mastered when we have dealt with sin itself. That is God's way of dealing with the problem, and, because He has so dealt with it in Christ, He takes up even the isles of war " as a very little thing". In short we must preach Christ as the wisdom, power, and love of God.

But we must preach it as a gospel. It is something given, something announced, something sent. We do not preach something that man has thought out, discovered, approved, or adopted. We preach something that confronts us because God was pleased to reveal Himself in His Son, and still confronts us when we listen to Him in our souls. We must preach it as witnesses. The gospel without testimony is unbelievable. It seems too good to be true.

Only the witness of those who know God as Christ has revealed Him, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour through lives that are redeemed, helped and renewed will persuade men that the thing is true. Those who display the victory of God constrain belief in a God who triumphs in righteousness and love. We must preach it with judgment. When God drew near to Israel in the time of Isaiah, not all entered into the day of their redemption, but only those who were spiritually near. It is so still. We believe that God can take the things of this war and turn them to His Glory and the fulfilment of His purpose. Those who share His mind and spirit will enter in, and be strengthened, renewed, and enriched. They will find both a new heaven and a new earth, but only as they keep very near to God. The things of war can be turned to account and blessing by those who make them the occasion for a better doing of the will of God. Acceptance as well as giving lies at the centre of our faith, and only the man who accepts God's purpose can turn the impact of evil into a spiritual thrust for God.

Let us boldly proclaim our gospel. The gospel of a God Who cannot be thwarted or defeated in His purpose for the world by anything that men may do in resistance to His will and refusal of His spirit, the gospel of a God Who in Christ Jesus forgives, trusts, and renews all who seek to do His will, the gospel of a God Who makes strong and brave all who are faithful to what He has committed to them, the gospel of a God Who is alive in Christian hearts all over the world and through them is even now overcoming the things of war. He moves to victory, and in that moving takes up even "the isles of war as a very little thing". Only He can do that, so for the things of War as for the things of Peace our hope is in God. He cannot fail. Nor shall men fail, if they put their trust in Him.

IX

THE COST OF A NEW WORLD

By Dr. Donald Soper

The words of Jesus Christ in the 24th Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel—words I suggest peculiarly appropriate to the temper of the present time—"Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold, but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

I find myself as a preacher, facing two great responsibilities and I want, if I may, to discharge them both sincerely, albeit inadequately.

The first and the more important is that I may present again to you the voice, the word, the gesture of Jesus Christ. You may hear in your own hearts, the last words of the hymn you have just been singing: "This is my Son, hear ye Him." It is the preacher's privilege and duty to bring the word of Jesus Christ, in season and out of season, in times of stress, in times of quiet—whenever the opportunity presents itself

he has to speak the word of Jesus, that those who listen may be touched in their heart and may respond and say "Master I come." It is also the preacher's business—and I take it that some of you at least to-night expect that there will be a fulfilment of the obligation which rests upon all who profess the Christian faith—to speak what is the mind of faith when that faith is threatened: and without fear or favour I intend to say a brief word by way of statement and then pass on to what is so much more fundamental—an exhortation, a sermon if I may, pronouncing what is the Gospel and asking for your verdict upon it.

Here is the statement, and I make it advisedly; I have prepared it carefully; I weigh my words. In these last days the Christians have seen—as the whole world have seen—a detestable act of aggression, and there is no one of us who can lightly look upon the flaunted violence of a power which has broken its treaty, its word, and by the very menace of its guns has imposed its authority in another land. We may be disposed to remember the extenuating circumstances and

we may have every sympathy with those who desire to become members of the German Reich. We cannot but in the name of Christ condemn the naked violence that is abroad in Europe to-day, and when we see these things we are tempted to protest. Let us in our protesting remember what it is that we seek, what it is that we oppose, and let us not step beyond the bounds of that which in Christian charity and understanding becomes us. It becomes us to say in the name of Christ that violence and aggression are like sin, for like sin, they bring with them death. It is easy to say it when it costs us nothing, but let us have the courage to say it now that it may cost us something. Then let us go on to say what is much more difficult. This country claims to be united in its determination to resent aggression. I would that they would follow us in what is the sequel to condemnation—an exposition of the truth, and as I see the truth in Jesus Christ it is this.—We may be horrified at the acts which we have seen in the midst of Europe in these last months, but let us not be surprised, for this is no new outbreak

of violence on the part of a mad dog, this is the inevitable and necessary consequence of years of unchristian act, it is part and parcel of a system which is unchristian, and in that system we too are implicated, and by that system we too shall be judged, unless in the name of Christ we denounce it for what it is and in its place set up that Christianity which we fain would seek. There is no hope of appeasement in Europe while injustice reigns. There is no justice that we can pride ourselves upon when some nations possess the outlet to raw material and all the prestige and opportunity of colonies, and other nations are denied these things. There is no substance in the claim that this world is a just place when the very conditions under which we are now living are written in the blood of the wars that have been fought; and this last exhibition of brute violence is but yet another consequence of a world of imperialism and capitalism. And we must say these things! I feel more than ever the conviction—which I have not failed to share—that you flatter yourselves this is part of a world order which is threatened because it is a denial

of Christ. We do not stand for an attempt to pacify a Dictator, and seeking to make war less dreadful; we stand in the name of Jesus Christ as the proponents of an entirely new system in which the Kingdom of Christ shall reign, when men "shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks," and we ought to be satisfied with nothing less than that. So much by way of statement.

The implication of that statement for me and for you will be the substance of what I have further to say. I find that the teaching of Jesus Christ has in it two outstanding characteristics —two characteristics which are both uncongenial and therefore widely avoided. The first of these is the characteristic of suffering, and like Rabelais we do not like suffering. "We are afraid of nothing except danger." We will make any excuse that we can that we may not be compelled to take the hard road, and yet Christianity says that only those who travel that narrow and hard road can come to the Kingdom. It is not, first and foremost, the suffering of humanity which ought to be our claim and ought to be

our starting point; it is that instead of a world that is in travail to bring forth the good, we see the abortive principle everywhere which is bringing forth evil, and it is for us to see that we do not out-fight and we do not out-violence those people who seek by their methods to build what they hope may be permanent. We can outlive them and out-suffer them and out-die them. It was the power of Jesus which was the beginning of Christianity and will be its re-beginning. I, like everyone else, do not want to be hurt; like all of you I would seek the easy road and the line of least resistance; I would do these things, but for the fact that evidence, experience, history, the word of God, my knowledge of Jesus Christ all compel me to say that it is a false road, it is a precarious path and there is no end to it. We are attempting to build our civilization to-day upon the foundations of security and happiness and joy, and they are only found through suffering, and they are only found through a Cross. That is why I hardly dare say these things to you. How much more congenial is it to preach that sort of cheerful Christianity—fol-

lowing the great hero Jesus Christ, going out like the knights of old to overcome the dragons; but that seems to have little or no place in the present circumstances. "It is good for us to be high on the mountain"—but you remember that this heartiness that was rebuked, how Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration wanted to find ease and security, and said, "Let us set up here three tabernacles," and Jesus rebuked him and went down from that Mount of Transfiguration, back to the things which would lead him inevitably to his Cross, and he set his face steadfastly towards the Cross. "In the Cross of Christ I glory": the gospel message comes to us, and the joy and the peace which come through a preparedness to face even death rather than give place to hypocrisy, doublemindedness, waxing cold as the writer of St. Matthew's Gospel tells us—"Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold"; that is compromising with our faith; when it begins to upset the tenor of our preconceived tranquility, when it seems that we can only rise up and defend by unchristian methods things we hold dear, then comes the

testing time. Some will say it is better to take up arms than to suffer in the name of Christ, and it is better to take up arms than that others should suffer in the name of Christ; and yet we ought to have learnt by this time that it is only through the refusal to take any way but the way which leads to the Cross that we can reach the Kingdom. I wish you could hear some of the things said on Tower Hill—"2,000 years of Christianity, and what have you done?" I feel inclined to say "I was not here all the time, so you must not blame me." But even if I say that, I recognise with sorrow, that the essential characteristic of Christianity has been lost when men have said "Let us take the way of security," and that way has failed them. I want to put to you in the name of all that I believe "Take up your Cross, no matter what it costs, rather than give up Christianity."

The second thing about Christianity—it is a cross, the element of suffering, the element of God. You may say "*Of course* Christianity has something to say about God," but do we recognize the lines of, and all the background of half the hymns

we sing? What was the background of Luther? This was Luther's attitude "I care not what happens to me because God will take care of me if I do what is right, and God through me can take care of all his children if I am obedient." They said to him "Luther you must not go to meet your enemies, they will imprison you." They did. What could Luther do shut up in a prison? I will tell you what he did, he translated the Bible into German. Because Luther knew that the ways of God and the powers of God cannot be measured by human mind, and that the moment we put limits to God's power we make ourselves into God—the principal actors on the stage—and forget that our little power is not sufficient to bring the Kingdom of God in. Christianity says you do not have to face this world of violence —God will conquer it through your obedience.

There are some very ironic statements in the New Testament if you will read them. Jesus said "You had better make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, because they know how to do things, because the children of the world are wiser than the children of the light." I say

to you quite sincerely that if I did not believe that God's power was the essential, the central characteristic of the Christian faith I should say that Hitler was right. I believe that it is God's power which can transform the bully and the aggressor, and when we begin to feel it is God that is our strength and our stay, so our moral, spiritual stature grows. That is what we need—a recovery of that sense that we are on the winning side, because if we give our hearts and lives to Jesus Christ we are on God's side, and God cannot lose the campaign because his power is equal to every single contingency that can possibly arise.

I have felt as I talked with people—I have been feeling it for some time—that they are willing and ready to strike out if they could only know the way; they are willing to be led and to be guided; they have lost faith in the old nostrums, they see the world going to pieces and they say "Where is the light and where is the strength that can give us real life?" Do you remember the time when Jesus rode into Jerusalem and said "If you had only known I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her

chickens under her wings and you would not; and therefore there shall be no stone left upon another." Jesus looked out upon Jerusalem and said "If you would only come and accept this gospel, there are powers and graces in it which will win the world and you won't do it. You will be smashed, you will die." Christianity ought to be saying that to the world now.

There is only one way, and it does not offer a programme that you can take home from this service to-night and act upon to-morrow. You can become a soldier as soon as you can shoot straight, but you cannot be a Christian until you become changed—that is the difference. A few hours ago there were men walking about in the streets of Europe in ordinary clothes, and within a few moments they were carrying guns and they were wearing helmets. That is how the world can mobilise its forces. Thank God we cannot do it that way.

My last word to you is this. Are we ready to march? We are not. Are we ready to campaign for this truth which is alone in Jesus Christ? Are we ready, that God's power should flow

through you? We are not, because to become an effective recruit Christianity demands first and foremost a changed heart. If we want to see this world redeemed from violence, the aggressor converted and changed and the world a family, then we ourselves must be equipped and ready, you must be recruited and mobilised and marching in the army of God, and we can only become that when we become changed. Will you say this night "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all." If you will say that God will make you a good soldier, and you will fight for him until His Kingdom comes.

Your weapon will be love, your responsibility —obedience and your confidence, His eternal power.

X

THE WAR 1939

By Bishop Winnington Ingram, K.C.V.O., D.D., LL.D.

Who is weak and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not?—2 Corinthians xi. 29.

Almost exactly twenty-five years ago I preached at St. Paul's Cathedral on the first Sunday of the last War, and I took for my text "The cup which my Father has given me shall I not drink it?" I pointed out that our Lord looked beyond all secondary causes of His passion, as for instance the treachery of Judas, the cupidity of Caiaphas, the cowardice of Pilate, to the first cause of all, namely that His Father had allowed it to happen, and therefore it must be right. It was the cup which not Judas or Caiaphas or Pilate had given Him to drink but the Father, therefore He was right to drink it to the dregs.

There were three brave and distinguished officers amidst that vast congregation, seated under the pulpit, and one of them came up to me next day and said: "I was unhappy when I

entered the Cathedral, as I am leaving tomorrow all I love most on earth, but I do not care what happens now". All three gave their lives for their Country a few months afterwards.

Now I am taking a different motto for this War. The issue to my mind is even more clearly defined. It is distinctly a fight between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of anti-Christ, but don't think that when I say this I am condemning the whole German race; they have been enslaved themselves by this spirit for years. You have only to read such an account of modern Germany as is contained in a book called *Reaching for the Stars* by an American Quaker who lived there for years, to see the reign of terror in which they have been living.

One terrible story I can never forget. A perfectly innocent man, who had been her host, fell under the suspicion of the Secret Police and was arrested, and his ashes returned a few days later in a coffin to his widow.

I prefer to believe that the real spirit of Germany was shown by the young sailors, who were forced by their orders to sink one of our

merchant ships at sight, but who took care to show the crew most chivalrously how to save their lives.

The accursed spirit which has possessed Germany, and has kept the whole world on tenterhooks for years, but which now, we hope, is to be destroyed for ever is made up of four things, most distinctly opposed to the spirit of Christ.

(1) A belief in might as opposed to right.
(2) A belief in lies as opposed to Truth.
(3) A belief in the Nation as a God instead of in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
(4) The oppression of the weak instead of the protection of them.

I know how easy it is to mistake patriotism for Christianity. As Nurse Cavell taught us, "Patriotism is not enough." Therefore I must prove these accusations one by one.

(1) Have we not all seen three small nations absorbed one by one by sheer force? Of course the whole world know that they have been, and the magnificent defence of Warsaw will ring in the ears of men for centuries to come; they have been beaten down by sheer might as opposed to right.

(2) Is it not true that a campaign of lies has been carried on persistently for months? Look at the broken promises of the Fuehrer, shown up in *The Times* of September 26th. In May, 1935, he said "Germany neither intends nor wishes to interfere in the internal affairs of Austria, to annex Austria or conclude an Anschluss." In September, 1938, "Sudetenland is the last territorial claim which I have to make in Europe." In February the same year he announced that "The Polish State respects the international conditions in this Country and Danzig and Germany respect Polish rights." And later, "We have assured our immediate neighbours on the integrity of their territory. That is no hollow phrase, it is our sacred will," yet how vast an extent of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Polish territory has since found its way into Herr Hitler's possession! Every promise has been broken one by one.

Look at the persistent misrepresentation of the motives of our own nation. Who could have striven for peace harder than our own Prime Minister? Some lies are so absurd they do no

harm, as for instance that Winston Churchill torpedoed the *Athenia*, or that we ourselves planned the murder of the Roumanian Prime Minister. But these lies were uttered all the same. Contrast with them the quiet restrained speeches of our Prime Minister and Lord Halifax. We are carrying on indeed a campaign of truth against lies.

(3) It is a fight for the God of the New Testament against the exaltation of the nation as God. We have the witness of no less a man than the well-known theologian Karl Barth who, in his remarkable book *The Church and the Political Problem of our Day* says "National Socialism has for its part long since declared by both word and deed that it is absolutely and in principle unable to recognise either its own deity in Him whom the Church calls God or its own life in the Christian life" (Page 48), or again on page 54. "Is it not a fact that inside the domains of National Socialism no one in any place or on any day is not safe-guarded against arrest, being thrown into prison, tortured, put to death, and finally handed back to his family as the contents of an ash bin. And

all this at the hands of courts without any public responsibility, without accusations, examination, control or appeal—or just simply at the hands of excited mobs of unauthorised alleged representatives of 'the will of the people'".

The German Church began by first tolerating it as a political experiment but has now discovered its true character.

(4) But it is on the last and fourth point on which I feel so strongly. I notice some people are puzzled why I attach so much importance to this particular text. It was uttered by St. Paul, but it always seems to me to express the quintessence of the spirit of Christ Himself. It was this motive that made Him leave his sapphire throne to rescue poor lost humanity. It was this that made Him, although in the form of God, "think it not a thing to be snatched at", to be equal in God. "Who is weak" He seemed to say, and "I am not weak by their side" "Who is being oppressed and I burn not to avenge them"! That is what carried Him through everything. He was the peerless Knight standing by the weak, every time shielding with His body

the oppressed. It is for this He endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is now set down on the right hand of His Majesty on High. And it was because St. Paul himself had caught this spirit that he was able to say, "Twice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, day and night I have been in the deep". "Who is weak, and I am not weak?". "Who is being oppressed and I burn not?" This is the reason that I take this text as the key-note and inspiration of this present war. We might for a time have made an ignoble peace by saying that Poland was no concern of ours. That was what we were invited to do. "Give us a free hand to deal with the weak nations in Eastern Europe, and we won't interfere —at any rate at present—with your British Empire." It was the old temptation Christ had in the old days. "I will give you the Nations of the World, and the glory of them, if you will fall down and worship me." But, to the eternal credit of our rulers, they refused the bribe. We could not stand by and see the weak trampled in the dust. On the contrary we said, "Who is weak? and we are not weak. Who is oppressed? and we

burn not to avenge them." We have again lived to see Pilate and Herod making friends together over the body of their victim, the one bludgeoning him in front and the other stabbing him in the back, for as the scripture says, "up to then they were at enmity between themselves."

Standing then in God's Pulpit I say, that this War is the spirit of Christ fighting the spirit of anti-Christ.

Now if this is so, what are we civilians to do?

(1) We must be ready to die in this cause. That does not mean that we are tired of life, or that we want to die. Personally, I have never enjoyed life more than I have during the last ten or twenty years, and do so to-day, but we clearly must be ready to lay it down for the sacred cause if called upon to do so. Christ gave His life for this cause, and St. Paul eventually did the same, and all through history the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church. Lest it be said that we old men just send the young ones to fight, I have offered to go down the line again under fire—as I did in the last War—if I am allowed to do so. But in any case, if we are

kept at home while we take all the precautions we are told to do, we civilians must preserve our morale and be quite unafraid.

I had a lesson in courage in the last War from a little East End girl. "Yes, it does frighten me", she said, "under an air raid, but I keeps it under". "They do say that there's no God, but I says there must be *someone* above the devil". Let us be as brave as that girl.

I always treasure the saying of one of my predecessors, Archbishop Laud, who on the day before his execution said, "What is death but a little vapour? Lord I am coming as fast as I can".

(2) Then in the second place we should all keep as bright and cheerful as we can. It is only those with a bad conscience who should be gloomy in this world, and although we do not claim to be at all perfect as a Nation on this matter our conscience is clear as the day. As I have said, who could have tried harder than our Prime Minister to achieve peace, and is there anyone of us who wanted war? It is very striking that the Liberal and Labour Party

who, in the last War were at first very much undecided, are the most keen and decided in this War. To them it is a fight for freedom against slavery. There are two ways of looking at this War, one way is looking upon it as an irretrievable calamity and a terrible bore, disarranging all our life, and upsetting all our plans and both things are true, but another way is to look upon it as a great crusade for liberty, and this (if his words are correctly reported) is the way Sir Edmund Ironside looks upon it when he said, "It was a great thing to be born for such a day as this." It is the point of view of the Happy Warrior of Wordsworth, "Who, if he be called upon to force some issue, good or bad, for human kind is happy as a lover and attired with sudden brightness like a man inspired."

(3) Then, of course, we must all do our bit. It is probably the greatest grief to some of us that we can do so little. But this fight for freedom will be won by the whole Nation doing cheerfully what it can, and at any rate bearing cheerfully the extra taxation which will be a great test of our National character.

(4) We can feel absolutely certain of final victory. Even if we perish ourselves the cause will win. We have seen Poland crushed down after a gallant struggle, but so was Belgium in the last War. Look at Belgium to-day, free and prosperous, so will Poland be. We are slow starters in the British Empire, but as Count Pukler pointed out in his book on *The Strength of Britain* our hidden resources are tremendous. We may lose every battle but never the last.

I was asked by one of the highest in the land, when things were at their worst in the last War, whether God was not puzzled by both sides appealing to him for victory. "Not at all, Sir," I said. "He is the God of all the earth and will give victory to the right one." And so He did, and so He will again.

(5) And then—this is perhaps hardest of all—let us fight this battle with no hatred in our hearts, certainly not against the ordinary German soldier, sailor and airman. There never was any feeling at the Front against him in the last War. Poor old Fritz was only doing his unpleasant duty. We cannot help feeling indignation

at the breaches of the laws of War, the bombing of open towns, the murder of women and children, but the leaders are responsible at the time, not the soldiers or the sailors, leaders who, if rumour is true, are feathering their own nests pretty successfully.

(6) And lastly if what I have said is true, we must carry on this war in the spirit of *Believing Prayer.*

We have great encouragement to Prayer both in the Old and New Testament. In the Old Testament we have Abraham pleading for Sodom, "If there were 50 righteous, if there be 40, if there be 30, if there be 20, if there be 10" and the answer is "I will not destroy it for 10's sake!"

Then again:—"Moses held up his hand above the battle, and when he held up his hand, Israel prevailed; when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed."

Then again:—Aaron ran in between (which is the exact meaning of interceding) the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed."

In the New Testament, Christ said "What-

soever ye shall ask in *My Name* I will give it you."

If we are fighting Christ's battle, then we may ask in *Christ's Name.*

We must therefore earnestly pray for victory, and "hold up our hands above the battle" as Moses did of old.

So let us take heart of Grace, and face what comes with brave hearts, with resolute determination and certain conviction of eventual victory, for, when this evil spirit has been expelled from the World and crushed for ever—far more skilfully than we did last time we must build up a New World wherein (to use the words of the old prayer) "peace and happiness, truth and justice religion and piety may be established among us for all generations," and the vision of Isaiah will be accomplished at last: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my Holy Mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."